

SILICON TIMES REPORT
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-* HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR FRIENDS & READERS!! *-
-* PLEASE - STAY SAFE! *-
-* DON'T DRINK & DRIVE! *-

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> From the Editor's Desk "Saying it like it is!"

This is it! The last day of the year.... New Year's Eve... I could go into a long drawn out "year in review" but... I won't I get far too wordy. I will however direct you to be sure and read this issue thoroughly as it has a great deal of information on many topics.

On another front. The Jaguar, Atari's new entry into the game machine marketplace, for which they were the trailblazers years ago, might be in for some rough seas. It seems our super snoop has discovered there is this "movement" at Atari where the whigs are "pushing to have the development for the Jaguar aimed to be done almost exclusively on a Falcon, Atari's slow selling computer offering. According to our snoop, the word is to downplay the potential of development on a PC and other computer in favor of doing so on a Falcon. Could this move have been influenced by the fact there are approximately one thousand of the Falcon machines in Atari's warehouse? He added. In this reporter's opinion, Atari, in wanting the Jaguar to be THE most successful of game machines yet should strive to have impressive software developed on anything as long as it complies with the specifications for the Jaguar! Why narrow the window of development to a crack when it has the potential to be as big as the imagination can take it? On the surface this appears to be another of the "ever so famous" Sunnyvale blunders in the making. All that can be said is we hope not. Hoping not for the sake of all the new owners of Jaguars and the future of Atari in the game machine world. After all, by all stretches of the imagination the Jaguar is their big hope and what appears to be their last chance. What ever happened to big order of TT030 machines destined for Jag devs? What became of all the thunderous boasts in NYC about how the goods for the JAG could be

developed on most any platform? The smoke, once again seems to be clearing.

Please dear friends this is the holiday season and we do understand how its so very easy to enjoy a "toddy for the body" with each other. But if you do intend to do so, don't drive that car! Most states now have the minimum blood alcohol level set to .08. That amounts to roughly one can of beer! Don't drink and drive!

Happy New Year to one and All!

STReport's Staff

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Ralph F. Mariano

Lloyd E. Pulley, Editor, Current Affairs

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> CPU STATUS REPORT

LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

IBM/POWER-PC/PC SECTION (I)
=====

> PC WRITE 4.15 STR InfoFile

**** PC-Write Lives! ****
=====

Starlite Software Corp. has announced that is has acquired exclusive publishing rights to the popular word processor PC-Write from developer Bob Wallace. PC-Write continues to be developed by Starlite Software and with the assistance of Bob Wallace, the original PC-Write author.

PC-Write version 4.15 is now available. It includes all the features that has made PC-Write so successful over the years, plus the following enhancements:

Graphics Support - PIX, PCX, TIF, & CGM graphic formats are supported. Graphics Manipulation - Rotate, Stretch, Scale, adjust contrast and add borders! Text can flow around graphics. Drawing- Lines, Rectangles, Dots or Circle both filled and hollow. Windows Support Copy, Cut & Paste from Windows in any amount! Pif and icon files are included.

Envelope Printing-Print envelopes quick with an optional return address. Customizable status line- Select and arrange items such as a keyboard, date and time, font, file name, column in inches, etc.

Plus great features like PostScript and LaserJet support, columns, built in thesaurus and spell checker, longer index entries, and much more!

PC-Write 4.15 has a registration price of \$69. with one year technical support or \$49. with thirty day getting started assistance. Both include a complete reference guide, getting started booklet, and your choice of diskettes in 3.5 5.25, please specify.

Update your current version to the new PC-Write 4.15 with a year of

against the printing press because it gave the masses a method of spreading information rapidly and induced the reading skills upon the peasants. The Big Whigs were against an "informed populace". One might suppose the government was feeling "threatened". The fine and very peaceful country of Switzerland is a prime example of guns for peace and serenity. Every household is REQUIRED to have at least one gun.

THE "BLEEDING HEARTS and FEAR MONGERS" have long touted the removal of guns from the possession of the "law-abiding, little guy".... they've also tried to blame TV and TV video games for the perceived ruthlessness of today's youth. The "Self-Proclaimed Elected Professionals" in Congress negligently burn up thousands of your tax dollars per hour playing head games trying to show the American Public they're "doing their job" by holding absurd hearings about whether or not TV video games are too violent and therefore, should be "regulated". These politicians NEED to be REGULATED!

A far better suggestion; They should look at the manner in which the US Government has managed to do everything in its power to destroy the basic building block of society... THE AMERICAN FAMILY! The "professional politicians" in government appear to have very machiavellian programs in play. It appears these programs are designed to; "Weaken the American Family, promote continued poverty, encourage further dependency on welfare programs and finally to institute stronger inroads (Courts and HRS) into the rearing and teaching of all children exactly the way the government sees fit. (Eliminating Family Influence) In decades to come, such practices will make it very easy for any total control government to completely manipulate the entire population from the womb to the tomb. Take a good look, a real good look. The government has, for all intents and purposes, driven the housewife and mother out into the general workforce. Propaganda has called such "urgings" equality. When in fact, its a matter of economic survival. The kids, unfortunately, are left to deal with growing up much to themselves. This is happening now! This is one of the real causes of the social problems we are experiencing today. We, as an educated responsible electorate, must send a very loud and clear message to these "representatives of the people" that we are sick and tired of their arrogant lack of representing us and they must either change or get voted OUT.

The "wonderful and benevolent" government brazenly turns a permissive head when it comes to the majority of everyday workplace jobs being labeled "part-time" by greedy employers to thwart the laws on the books from more sensible times overseen by responsible government. When at one proud time, medical benefits, overtime and job security were prime factors in the American work place. Today, its a matter of "build the tax base" ...get them all working... even if its only for minimum wage and part time. By the time the "thieves" in Congress and the Senate are weeded out and the "injustices" being perpetrated against the Bill of Rights and middle America are exposed and corrected, two generations of Americans will have been exploited to the max and the family, as we once knew it, as far as a solid building block of society and a firm teaching foundation of true morals and common decency will be nothing more than a fond memory. Moms, Apple Pie etc.. (The Norman Rockwell view) are mere memories today. In fact, many politicians scoff at and make jokes of the Rockwell perception.

Still, there are those who insist upon allowing themselves to be focused on the "so-called" evil of guns by the crafty politicians who really don't want your attention focused upon the very real underlying problems of today. Namely; The poor government, crooked politicians and bad cops.

It is still an irrefutable fact that an inanimate object cannot possibly be evil. Only the implementation of such objects can be. Thus, the implementor only can be evil. Take a look at the REAL causes of lawlessness in this country today. The young folks of today are growing up watching the "priests, politicians, police and just about every other segment of the 'respected leadership' being exposed for the moral cripples and criminals they are. Why? That is the real question. Because they too, at this time, are a product of the very same thing they are accused of. Government must be cleaned up before the general population can do so.

Government must set the example before social structure can be asked or required to do the same. A young person living in a cold water flat when its 10 degrees below outside while a local politico is blowing thousands on "Fact finding" about video games or trying to garner support through exercises in political chicanery with gun control lawmaking just doesn't make it any more. That young person is going to get their "fair share" one way or another. Take away the guns, institute curfews, do whatever.. they'll find another way to do what they feel is right for them. Much as its happening now. The real fix is to re-teach government that the family is the strongest factor in building a strong America with morals and caring for each other.

Society is going through great upheavals of turmoil and has been for the last two decades. As a direct result of the Warren Commission and its, now obvious, whitewash of the Kennedy MURDER. (the most grievous of hurts of that decade where it all began to crumble) The public's lack of trust in government began failing in catastrophic proportions. Since that tragic beginning, the true fundamental building blocks of a solid, moral social structure has and is being methodically destroyed by poor government, crooked politicians, poorly trained and totally inept law enforcement and a decadent welfare system. The incidences of provable brutality and opportunistic abuses of certain laws being made public has increased dramatically in the last decade. This is due primarily to the widespread use of video cameras by the general public. Isn't it interesting how the "lawyers" for the various government agencies involved have hammered away at the actual validity of the videotape's contents? (Rodney King) They claim that what you see plainly on the tapes is not necessarily what is happening. What will they say when the public uses the same statements as a defense against government video tapes. IE., (the truck driver beaten in the LA riots, videotaped traffic stops etc., drug busts.??) Sadly enough, even with the visibility and credibility of video tape, the "Davidian Massacre" still reeks of governmental abuse of power, arrogance, corruption and ineptness.

In the past, the deniability factors of such abuses were quite high. Now, fortunately with video taping, its just the opposite. Yet, there are still those who fervently wish to "render harmless" the law-abiding public by, incredibly, disarming them! Next, they'll probably propose a "National Identity Card" accompanied by "instant data bank retrieval" access offered through the "CARD". (How many remember the expression; "Papers Please!")

Watch out fellow Americans! The basic Bill of Rights our Great Nation was founded upon is being eroded left and rightyet people seem to refuse to do or say much about it. To bad they are in the "don't rock the boat" syndrome. The GIs who fought in Asia and Europe to eliminate "Group Punishment, Curfews, Social Controls, Government Children Education Centers, Re-Education Policies etc.. did they waste their lives and time? Better yet, they fought to eliminate oppressive governments

idkfa	Very Happy Ammo (Full Ammo + 200% armor)
idspispopd	Toggles No Clipping mode. Allows walking through walls. You can't pick up objects while clipping is on.
idbehold?	Where ? = a All Map. Shows entire level map when you press the Tab key; areas not yet visited shown in gray. Duration: 1 Level. ? = s Strength becomes superhuman. Vision briefly turns red. When you punch an opponent (Weapon Selection 1) he/it SPLATTERS! Duration: 1 Level. ? = i Invisible. Your form becomes indistinct and enemy attack is inaccurate. Duration: 60 seconds. ? = l Light Amplifier. Even areas in total darkness appear bright as day. Duration: 120 seconds. ? = r Radiation Suit. You can wade through the green toxic radioactive waste ponds without harm. Duration: 60 seconds. ? = v Invulnerable. Vision becomes gray scale. Immune to all enemy attack. Duration: 30 seconds.
idcleve??	Jump to episode/level specified by digits ??. Episode = 1-3 (except in shareware version, where it is always 1). Level = 1-9.
idmypos	Displays your heading angle and x,y coordinates in hex code.
idchoppers	Displays "DOESN'T SUCK - GM". Replaces Weapon Selection 1 (fists) with the chain saw.
iddt	Use in AutoMap. First use shows entire level map, including areas you haven't visited. Second use adds location of all objects on floor. Third use returns AutoMap to normal.

File originally uploaded to CompuServe by Bruce Waldmer [76350,224] as DOOMCHT.TXT in DOOMCK.ZIP on 17-Dec-93. Edited and expanded by Andrew Poth [74640,1523] on 20-Dec-93.

DOOM CHEAT KEYS [12/18/93]

Copies of various messages posted on CIS regarding hidden cheat keys in DOOM.

Thanks to those who discovered and/or posted the information! This document compiled by The Maverick [70671,1524]. Please let me know of

any new developments....

The following information was initially posted by Thomas Christie
71777,204 (original message lost)

Make a file called D.BAT in you DOOM directory consisting of:

```
DOOM -DEVPARM -WART 1 %1 -SKILL %2
```

Then type D (map number) (skill level) to run DOOM on the selected map at the selected skill level. For example, D 9 4 would start you on level 9 (the secret level) at skill level 4 (ultra-violence.)

```
#: 507235 S7/Action/Arcade Games  
    17-Dec-93  07:41:50  
Sb: #Doom - debug keys?  
Fm: John E Marquardt 73021,2437  
To: Jake Pearson 70604,556
```

For DOOM, while you are playing type the following.

idkfa = full weapons and keys (No BFG 9000 or Plasma gun in the SW version tho')

iddqd = god mode

idbehold and S,V,L,A, and some other to turn on the LI Goggles, etc.
Play with this one, it would look like idbeholdL and so on.

idclev followed by an episode number (defaults to 1 if you have the SW version) and then a level number.

Hope that helps, and Happy Blasting!
I really do have more fun with the game without the debug keys, but they are fun sometimes.

John Marquardt

```
#: 507778 S7/Action/Arcade Games  
    17-Dec-93  21:08:21  
Sb: #507235-Doom - debug keys?  
Fm: michael maceri 76270,3211  
To: John E Marquardt 73021,2437
```

Also, "idspispopd", turns clipping on and off, allowing you to walk through walls and amazingly jump to openings, because of the x,y co-ordinate system used...

```
#: 506368 S7/Action/Arcade Games  
    16-Dec-93  07:13:42  
Sb: #DOOM - UNDOCUMENTED  
Fm: Joseph Patriarca 76424,614  
To: ALL
```

While playing with DOOM I've discovered some undocumented Keys and command Line parameters.

Keys: , (comma) and . (Period) are strafe left and strafe right. Very useful for avoiding the fire balls thrown by the imps and for running along the walls looking for secret passages, use with shift to move faster

In map mode the G key will turn on a grid.

Command Line Parameters (usage c:doom -devparm)

-DEVPARM turn developers mode on, this is the most usefull command by far. When you use this parameter the F1 key will save the current content of the screen as a PCX file. This is very handy when in map mode. When you have explored a level you can go to map mode and press the F1 key to save a copy of the map. You can then print it out and use it to mark the secret doors and location of treasures. Hopefully some person will then upload these maps.

-WART episode game This needs to be used with the DEVPARM parameter and allows you to warp to any level of the game. The parameter episode is the game number 1 for the shareware version and game is the level 1 to 9 (1 to 8 are the normal levels and 9 is the secret level) . Use with the -SKILL parameter to set the skill level.

USAGE DOOM -DEVPARM

-WART 1 9 -SKILL 1 to get to the secret level at the whimpy skill level.

Other parameters I have not as yet found a use for

-FILE -PLAYDEMO -TIMEDEMO -DEBUGFILE -RECORDFRINM -RECORD -NODRAW
-NOBLIT

HOPE THIS HELPS!

#: 506710 S7/Action/Arcade Games
16-Dec-93 15:09:21
Sb: #506368-#DOOM - UNDOCUMENTED
Fm: David Saraniero 71005,2557
To: Joseph Patriarca 76424,614 (X)

About the -devparm...

The -record and -recordfrom options are for 'recording' your movements. -playdemo and -timedemo will play these back in demo format. Once in the record mode, press Q to stop recording. -recordfrom will start recording from a saved game. (I think I might have explained this better before...) Hope that makes sense.

It seems the -noblit and -nodraw could be for timing purposes? I'm not sure. The game runs and quits fine, it's just that there is nothing on the screen! Then it gives time specs... I haven't figured those out yet either...

-David

#: 507765 S7/Action/Arcade Games
17-Dec-93 21:01:03

Sb: #506710-DOOM - UNDOCUMENTED
Fm: Kris Pelley 72763,2357
To: David Saraniero 71005,2557

Blitting is fancy word for copying images into a video buffer or the video display itself. Drawing (in this instance) probably means copy the video buffer into actual video memory (so that you can see).

These two are probably only for determining the speed of the game under various conditions.

Kris

#: 507032 S7/Action/Arcade Games
16-Dec-93 21:01:31
Sb: #506890-#DOOM 1.1 Problems
Fm: Software Recording Corp. 76447,3264
To: Marc L. Allen 72347,3442 (X)

I don't know about your first 2 problems, but the directory C:\DOOMDATA is hardcoded into DOOM. The only way to change it is to edit the binary (that is, executable) file.

Steve Snyder

#: 508055 S7/Action/Arcade Games
18-Dec-93 08:22:13
Sb: #507993-Doom Patch
Fm: Software Recording Corp. 76447,3264
To: David Peel 71644,1251

No one claimed that the use of C:\DOOMDATA would be changed by the patch.

The patch is intended to fix several problems in the DOS extended that DOOM uses and to correct an incompatibility with the original (v1.0) Sound Blaster.

Steve Snyder

P.S. If the C:\DOOMDATA is really that intolerable, you can edit DOOM.EXE to change the hardcoded path. There are 3 references to the ASCIIIZ string "c:\doomdata\xxxxxxxx.yyy", where xxxxxxxx.yyy is a file type (savegam.dsg or default.cfg). It worked for me. With a binary editor, search on the string "c:\doomdata".

#: 507599 S7/Action/Arcade Games
17-Dec-93 17:47:31
Sb: #506752-DOOM codes found...
Fm: Ron Eisner 74010,3011
To: Andre Perkowski 76330,3454 (X)

Andre,

> ... here are cheat codes for DOOM.

Thanks for posting them! Unfortunately they do not seem to work in

network games. Each code begins with "ID"; but "I" is also the key to press to chat with the "indigo" player (black), so pressing "I<anything>" sends everything after the "I" as your chat text to the indigo player. If you find codes that work in network games, please post them!

Ron

#: 506886 S7/Action/Arcade Games
16-Dec-93 18:31:04
Sb: #DOOM maps revealed
Fm: Dave Timoney (Humongous) 72662,1360
To: All

Well, I don't think it's been mentioned here, but since someone already mentioned the -devparm feature for the DOOM command line, I'd like to add something. This information is courtesy of the Internet, where many folks have spent a lot of effort to learn this information.

Among the many things you can do once you're in the game with the -devparm enabled, go to the map screen (you did read the instructions and press F1, right?) and type 'iddt' (no quote) to reveal the entire map for the level. While, at first, I thought this info would ruin the game for those that can't resist walkthrus, hintfiles, and the like - I've since come to realize that just knowing where a passage is doesn't necessarily help you get there <g>

And, as mentioned, with the -devparm enabled, pressing F1 gives you a screen dump, in PCX format. If you have a 'paint' program, you can possibly print the maps out so you can make notes.

Dave

#: 507223 S7/Action/Arcade Games
17-Dec-93 07:01:31
Sb: #507127-DOOM maps revealed
Fm: Crusader [GAMPUB] 72662,1051
To: Dave Timoney (Humongous) 72662,1360 (X)

Not only does it provide the full map (and it stays active as you move from level to level, so you don't need to type it again... but it ALSO, when typed a second time will show ALL OBJECTS (I believe) on the level, enemies, barrels, powerups, etc., etc... when typed a THIRD time it will revert the map back to the state it would be in normally... and you DO NOT need to start the game with -DEVPARM to get it to work... :)

Note that there ARE some areas that will be shown that you will never be able to get to, but they don't count on your secret score (but they are interesting to explore with 'no clipping ()' active, like the monster holding room for the pentagram at the secret military base...

--Crusader--

That's all for now....

:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

Set your communications software to Half Duplex (or Local Echo)

Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).

Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type: XTX99587,CPUREPT then, hit RETURN.

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MAC/APPLE SECTION (II)

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Randy Noak, Editor

Mac Report

by Randy Noak

Where in the heck did the year go? The older I get, the faster those days seem to fly by. This is the time of year when it is traditional to look back and reflect on the year just past and to vow, this time for sure, to keep all those new year resolutions. In computerdom though, the past (and even the present) is obsolete. The Mac is about breaking with traditions and the past, and so we will put 1993 behind us and look to 1994 and beyond.

In 1994, look for an expanded Mac Report. New staffers Steve Kiepe, Guillaume Brasseur and John Donohue will join veteran Jeff Coe in producing interesting and informative articles and reviews. In fact, look for Guillaume's first review in this issue. I'll still be here to put it all together along with press releases, news and commentary. We hope you enjoy it. Now let's take a look into the Mac Report Crystal Ball.

Probably the biggest "future news", is the PowerPC. 1994 will bring several new PowerPC models bringing us unprecedented speed and ease of use. Rumor has it that the first PowerPC models, (code named PDM, Carl Sagan and Cold Fusion) will run native PowerPC applications 3-4 times as fast as a Quadra 700! For those that missed it, here's a "rumor" we

published a couple of weeks ago:

Mac Report PowerPC Sneak Peek!!

PDM

Code named PDM, the bottom of the line PowerPC Mac has a 60mhz PowerPC 601 chip. Priced at around \$2000, it has 8 megs of RAM and a 160 meg (or 230) hard drive and comes in a Quadra 610 type box. A built-in CD-ROM is an option.

Carl Sagan

Next in the line-up is the "Carl Sagan" (who thinks up these code names?). With a 66mhz 601, a 230 or 500 meg hard drive, 8 megs of RAM three NuBus slots and an optional CD-ROM drive in a Quadra 650 type case. Price? Around \$3000

Cold Fusion

Top o' the line "Cold Fusion" is based on an 80mhz 601. Priced at around \$4000, it comes in a Quadra 800 type box with 8-16 megs of RAM, a 230 or 500 meg hard drive, and a CD-ROM drive.

Pretty impressive, huh? Apple says that these machines will be available in the first quarter of 1994, so we'll see if the "rumor" is true. Take a minute, go back and look at those projected prices. Chances are the slower, less capable Mac you're using now cost as much or more as the new PowerPC Macs. Look for downward pressure on computer prices to continue in 1994.

Sometimes the future arrives early, and CD-ROM is the future and it's here now. So far, we've only scratched the surface of CD-ROM technology. PowerPC's will make faster access times and transfer rates necessary so look for pressure on CD-ROM drive manufacturers to produce faster drives.

What about the Newton in 1994? Look for tablet sized Newtons. Handwriting recognition will be improved and more useful programs will be introduced. Be on the lookout for lower Newton pricing also.

1994 will see the major on-line services slugging it out in an effort to lure subscribers. Look for GEnie to release their long-awaited and long-promised Mac Front End. America On-Line will debut their 9600 baud access software. 9600 baud access will be at the same price as 2400 baud access providing an even greater value to it's subscribers, and CompuServe will increase the number of it's 14,400 baud nodes. High-speed modem prices will continue to plummet, making 2400 baud modems garage-sale items. All-in-all, 1994 will be a very good year for the modem user.

The Mac Report Crystal Ball grows dim. Perhaps if the Publisher crosses my palm with silver? No? Oh well, I tried. May 1994 bring all Mac Report readers health, wealth, and happiness. From Jeff, Guillaume, Steve, John and I, "Happy New Year!"

Here's Guillaume Brasseur's review of Capitalist Pig. This looks like the kind of game I like. Strategy. Money, Power. Kinda makes me feel warm all-over. <RBG>

****Capitalist Pig** A Mac Report Review**

by Guillaume Brasseur

"Capitalist Pig" is a business simulation in which the player decides what he wants to sell and at what price. The player is in complete control of his company through his business, financial and marketing plans that he customizes according to his plans for the future. The player decides what he wants to produce, whom he wants to sell his product to, the price of his product and all the other decisions that help run his business. He is also free to hire and fire his managers, his workers, his shippers and his sellers to keep the company profitable. The object of the game is to lead your company to success while coping with problems like embezzlement, fire, terrorism, scandal, strikes, tax audits, public offerings and an office building that cannot grow indefinitely for it is limited to fifteen floors. Four advisors help the player to succeed along the game. The accountant monitors the company's assets, the problems inside the company and the worker's productivity. The economist evaluates the economic trends and makes suggestions according to those. The lawyer monitors lawsuits and the public relations agent monitors market share and value. Each advisor will report on the condition of the player's business and tell him how to do better by suggesting a different course of action. For example, if interest rates are low your economist will suggest that it is a good time to borrow money by increasing your credit line and if you are getting sued by your consumers your lawyer will suggest that investing in insurance is a good and profitable decision. Furthermore, a manager will help the player decide when it is time to hire personnel by flashing messages indicating which workers need help in their work. For example, if your sellers cannot take all the orders a message will appear saying so, indicating to you that it is time to hire more sellers.

In all, "Capitalist Pig" is a good game that makes for hours of fun. Do not however expect to build a billion dollar corporation on the first try for it is almost impossible. For those who master the game at the easy level, new and more difficult challenges await them as they move on to the medium and hard level settings in the setup window. The player just has to experiment with different ideas to build his business to the #1 position on the list. Even though this game does not have exciting action it is very creative and a must for those who enjoy business and those who are looking to go into it. "Capitalist Pig" by Pigworks is a delightful game. I recommend it for people over 15 but the manual's explanation of the principles of economics will enable even the younger kids to play. It is licensed and distributed by Pluma Software and you can find it in most computer stores. It has a retail price of around forty dollars but on sale, the price comes down to around thirty dollars.

That's it for this week. Next week we'll be off of our Holiday schedule and back to our regular Mac Report features. As always, please feel free to send your comments or questions to me at:

America OnLine: STReportRN
Compuserve: 70323,1031
GEnie: R.NOAK

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ATARI/JAG SECTION (III)

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Dana Jacobson, Editor

> From the Atari Editor's Desk

"Saying it like it is!"

by Dana P. Jacobson

Well, another year is about to end; I'm not sure if it's that's a relief, or a regret. For one thing, it's been a stressful year for many. The economy woes, natural disasters, and other distressful events certainly took their toll. There have been some positive things, however, as well. Peace, or the beginnings of it, in the Middle East; and the end of apartheid in South Africa - to name a couple.

On the Atari front, there have certainly been many ups and downs throughout the year. Fortunately, depending on your point of view, 1993 ended on an up beat with the Jaguar successfully released in time for Christmas. Still, things have not been overly positive. More and more users have left the userbase for "greener" pastures. Atari developers have a less positive outlook with the Falcon taking a back seat to the Jaguar. The scarcity of new software was deafening this past year, unless you were a MIDI and/or graphics enthusiast. Atari insists that there will be better things coming out regarding the Falcon and successors, but the "when" is what has most people concerned. Will the Jaguar really reach its full potential and be an overwhelming success for Atari in 1994? If they can keep up with the demand, and maintain that demand, I see no reason why success can't be theirs. Will Atari siphon off some of the Jaguar revenues to put into the Falcon and really do something positive with it similarly as they have the Jaguar; or will they put it back into Jaguar development? Common sense tells me to stick with the front-runner and funnel the revenues back into the Jaguar. I hope that this scenario doesn't work exactly that way. Atari computer owners have "patiently" waited out the lean periods and really deserve to see Atari's potential come to light and be recognized as one of the best computers available today. Atari really needs to market the Falcon and next generation machines fully; and let the company, developers, dealers, and users reap the rewards for their diligence.

Current Notes and ST Informer are still with us for hard copy magazines, thankfully. We lost Z*Net online magazine and there was a resurgence of Atari Explorer Online. And, of course, STReport stemmed the tide although it's made some adjustments over the past few months to reflect the multi-platform needs of many Atari users.

Atari shows were still happening throughout the year, but attendance was a far cry from past years. The degree of success for these shows was certainly subjective, but overall the reports were positive. The major disappointment for the '93 show year was the absence of the WAACE show - a wonderful tradition that simply burned out with no clear idea as to whether or not it will be rekindled.

Atari United!, the brainchild of Gordie Meyer and Pattie Abarbiero from Delphi, was born. AU!, a mechanism to unite Atari users and groups across the country, has grown somewhat but still essentially in the infancy stage. Look for some good things to happen with AU! next year, though.

STReport had its ups and downs as well in '93. There were a few controversial issues covered throughout the year that STReport simply refused to back away. Heated issues dealing with conflicts between developers was the major controversy for the year, with lesser issues

popping up here and there. Relations were definitely strained during these periods, and some are probably irreversibly severed. Yet, STReport has endured along with most of its revelations throughout the year. Support, while certainly tense at times, became stronger.

With the sharply reduced focus by Atari with its computer line, STReport diversified in recent months. STReport's editor/publisher, Ralph Mariano, took a less active role with the magazine and split the magazine into three segments: Atari, PC, and Mac - each with its own editors. While this diversity has had disheartening effects on many Atari readers (myself included), it remains one of the most popular downloads throughout the country, including the online services. Venturing into the Mac and IBM SIGs on the onlines shows that other platform users are also very interested in STReport, by a 2-3 times margin as when we were Atari-specific. The future of an Atari-specific STReport is truly dependent on what Atari does next year. Truthfully, all of our futures is dependent on that potential upstart in Sunnyvale!

The Jaguar has been the word in the gaming world these past few months. Much has been said about it, especially once it got into the hands of the users. 1994 seems headed for the "Year of the Jaguar."

Since this is New Year's Eve, I want to keep this editorial short. I'm also fighting with a flu/cold bug which just doesn't seem to want to go away!! Hopefully, by the time this gets sent out, I'll have completed the promised initial segment of our online services and support staff, starting with Delphi. If for some reason it doesn't appear in this issue, I apologize. Although I rarely catch these bugs (first in over 5 years!), when I do, it's usually the one that a dozen different cold remedies can't beat!

Let me take this time to wish you all Happy New Year!! May the new year bring you happiness, prosperity, and continued good health. Until next time....

-Dana

Delphi' Atari Advantage
TOP TEN DOWNLOADS (12/29/93)

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) DELUXE INVADERS | (6) IDEALIST 3.4 |
| (2) ATARI MAIL ORDER DEALERS | (7) PLASMA MODULE FOR WARP 9 |
| (3) WORLD CONQUEST V.0.7B | (8) WARP9 CP UPDATE 1.51 --> 1.6 |
| (4) STORM PATCH 1.01>1.02 | (9) FD144.TXT |
| (5) HARDWARE REGISTERS | (10) LHARC 2.32 |

HONORARY TOP 10

The following on-line magazines are always top downloads, frequently out-performing every other file in the databases.

ST REPORT (Current issue: STREPORT #9.52)
ATARI EXPLORER ONLINE (Current issue: AEO - VOLUME 2, ISSUE 22)

Look for the above files in the RECENT ARRIVALS database.

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> The Ole Fishin' Hole STR Feature
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The Old Fishin' Hole
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-A Guide to the Online PD/Shareware Waters.

by John R. Duckworth

Welcome once again to my little corner of STReport. Those of you who download the magazine as soon as it is posted will probably read this on New Year's Eve...not too long until the great ball drops in Times Square to ring in the great new year of 1994, and to make a final salute to the passing of 1993. I hope the past year has brought great wisdom, happiness, and fulfillment...and that in 1994 you will be blessed even more. In this week's column I will cover two utilities that have recently made their way into the online waters. The first utility is one that will help users keep track of Father Time as we head into the new year. MyClock v.1.07 by Frank Schafer is yet another clock accessory for all Atari TOS computers.

This clock may display time either in analog or digital form, and may use GDOS (or SpeedoGDOS) to fancy up the display a bit. As in most clock accessories, the date may be displayed...but MyClock is from Germany so there is no support for the standard American format. Different clock face formats may be selected as well as hand types to allow a user to tailor the display to his/her personal tastes. A few more designs might have been nice, since there are only 4 different hand designs, and 5 different face selections. The clock may be sized by the user, and all preferences may be saved to load automatically the next time the clock is used. One useful characteristic is that the clock will automatically pop up onto the desktop when loaded, so that it need not be selected from the accessory menu like most other clocks. One last, but potentially useful feature is it's alarm functions. A .ALM file is loaded by the clock when run which is simply a text file stating what time/day an alarm should go off. Since the manual is in German, it may take a bit of trial and error before figuring out all of the alarm settings, so experiment before you actually need to use it. I seldom need an alarm while computing, so this clock offers no real advantage over the superb talking clock included with the Falcon (besides, I'm the kind of person that likes to be told what time it is without looking), but if you need a dependable clock with preset alarms be sure to snag MyClock v.1.07...it's a small file anyway!

The second utility is Mountain View v.1.5 by Anthony Wilson. Mountain View is a text reader program who's main claim to fame is the ability to convert First Word and TX2 files to plain ASCII. Since

compiled by Joe Mirando
73637,2262

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Ahhh... my first column of the year. There's something special about the first 'anything' of the year. It's a time for hope, good will, and charity (I have _hope_ that Atari computers will do better this year, I offer _good_will_ to all those loyal Atari users out there, and I've decided to be _charitable_ to those who don't use CompuServe. That's really what this column is all about. If you use CompuServe, you've probably seen some of these posts. If you don't use CompuServe, you should know about all the cool things that get discussed every week here in the Atari Forums.

So let's get busy...

From the Atari Productivity Forum
=====

Jay Craswell, a long-time Atari user and developer, posts:

"My goal of implimenting the one set of HP_PCL commands I need for a project looks like it's done! Now I have to figure out how everyone manages to do any useful work thru the serial ports of the iBM machines. What a pile of junk! A friend tells me that he has actual working code for the iBM serial ports. It goes something like this. Send byte, Check to see if serial chip has lost its brains, If so reprogram serial port and resend data. Is it just me or is this a joke? Course the situation is made worse by the fact that the BIOS

comm routines which everyone stupidly try to use poll the data (crude) and since it does not always work people like me waste time trying to fix working code on the other end. Ugggh!! I HATE PCs!"

Albert Dayes of Atari Explorer Online Magazine (a very knowledgeable guy himself, asks Jay:

"Is it that bad? I never really worked with serial communications much. I know there are several books on the subject. But most are in C or C++. <grin>"

Jay tells Albert:

"According to a friend who writes PC code it is. I actually did not believe him but... I found a reference in some PC programming books that said somthing to the effect. Comm does not work using the Bios, It is still not fixed in Windows. Programers who wish to access the serial port must buy third party products to do communication correctly. I wonder what MSDOS 2.1 thru 6.2 were for? What a joke..."

Our own dear, sweet, Editor-In-Chief, Ralph Mariano (really, he is... check the Masthead!) tells Jay:

"That's odd.... I have FOUR serial ports on this machine and they all work just fine at 57.6 kbaud with the 16550 uarts and FIFO buffers. That's IN or OUT of Windows under DOS 6.2..."

Jay tells Ralph:

"You have Serial Extensions that work correctly. That's not unusual. The fact that your software even knows about 16550 uarts is proof that you're not using the underlying stuff that I stupidly assumed worked correctly. It's one of those inside programmer things. Everyone knows not to use this! <grin> Except me."

Well, I guess that's enough DOS-bashing... for now (even though DOS does deserve it).

Ray Foley asks:

"I would like to know if anyone else has a program writer that will allow me to, via remote control, download all of my Atari ST files to my MS-DOS PC. The reason I want to do this is because my PC has a tape backup and I would like to backup all 80MEG of my Atari ST hard drives without using disks or without having to hand transfer my files one at a time using a standard terminal program."

Dazzz Smith (gee, there must have been a sale on "Z"s the day he was born) tells Ray:

"If the tape backup has a SCSI interface you could piggyback it onto the ST hard disk and back it up using Gemar (Unless there is a newer PD alternative I haven't heard about)."

Jon Sanford tells us:

"I came across a little (3 3/4 x 5 1/2 ") booklet (c) 1990 Interactive Publishing Ltd. Europa House, Adling Park. Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK104np.

Free! Top 28 PD Programs Pocket Guide.

Here are the names of the programs: Geography Test, Jigsaw, Super Breakout, Mr Dig, Extensor Ace Invaders, 1st word, ST Writer Elite, Double Sentry, Easy Text, Zap Card, Sheet 2.0, Gemini, Uniterm, Codehead Utilities, Double Click Utilities, Assem/Disassem, Sozobon C, Ani ST, Neocrome, Aim, Img Converter, Picswitch, Masterpaint, Score Perfect, Soundtracker, Make Music, Delux Piano,

There are many here that I have never seen. There are good PD Programs I could add to the list. Do you know which of these programs are in the CIS libraries? Do you know that some of them aren't? Do you know that some are not PD programs?

I have in mind a project to accumulate a list to answer "I just got a AtariST. How do I get started?" Also IMHO the CIS libraries require more expertise than I have ever bothered to accumulate to be sure what you want is or isn't there.. Perhaps a section of the libraries "50 top PD programs" & "50 top Shareware Programs".. Wha da ya tink?

No word from anyone else yet, but I think that anyone with the energy and drive to compile such a list should be encouraged as much as possible... GO FOR IT, JON!

Meanwhile, Mitch Brown asks for advice about downloading:

"I am having A LOT of trouble downloading from here. Which protocol should I use? I am using Freeze Dried Terminal. It has Xmodem CRC, Xmodem Checksum, and Xmodem 1k. It also included Zmodem (which this system apparently can't use, and Ymodem. And then one called Fmodem."

Sysop Jeff Kovach tells Mitch:

"I also use Freeze Dried Terminal. I use Ymodem-G all the time with no problems, and it's faster than Xmodem or Ymodem. The only problem is, if there's an error during the transfer, it aborts. Regular Ymodem is slower, but will retry on an error."

Steve Sathue asks:

"Can anyone assist me with the following? I have an (old) Atari 520 ST with one floppy drive. I also have a lot of word processing documents that have been created with ST Writer Elite (a freeware product circa 1987 vintage). Are there any utilities (freeware, shareware, retail) that I can use in order to import these documents into a format which I can load into WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS (on IBM hardware). If no products will do completely what I want, are there any which would at least translate the ST Writer documents into an ASCII format that I could somehow transfer to PC disks."

Albert Dayes of Atari Explorer Online Magazine tells Steve:

"In the newest version of Stwriter 4.8 (which is the latest, and is in the libraries) you can save the text as ascii. Then you can import it into any word processor including WP 5.1."

John Damiano at Transierra adds:

"With the commercial version...Multiwriter...you could load and then save in WP format. Its 4.1 format but Im pretty sure the newer versions of WP will read that format. Its about 60 dollars I think for Multiwriter. I use it all the time since its so fast and easy. Its also nice to finally get Noonan some financial reward for all his work over the years on the free versions."

Sysop Bob Retelle jumps into the conversation and tells Steve:

"It sounds like you're looking for a utility that runs on the IBM that will translate old STWriter files.. is that what you need..?"

Unfortunately I don't know of anything like that offhand... there may be others here who are more familiar with wordprocessor formats for the PC, who could suggest something that might convert the files.

As the other answers indicated, it would be easy to do with an ST, but if you no longer have yours, that's probably not an option. If there's anyone in your local area, or a local Atari Users' Group, they might be able to convert the files to ASCII for you..."

Frank Hense tells Sysop Bob:

"I don't know whether the old utility-- Dcopy is available in the Forum LIBS or not but it had a feature for stripping ST writer codes and If I remember correctly worked quite well."

On the subject of turning all peripherals on along with the computer, as

opposed to turning the hard drive on then, after it "gets up to speed", turning the computer on, Jeff at Intersect Software posts:

"I've had no problem with my ST, Mega ST or TT in turning them all on at the same time via a power strip. I have modified my ST and Mega ST to have a reset time delay of 15 seconds. The TT has that built in.

Sysop Dan Rhea tells Jeff:

"[That is] Slick, I should add that to my ST. It's all one powerbar at the present. And the power-on sequence is such a bore (said with snooty accent <grin>).

Did you mod the ST or are the mods in the power bar?"

Jeff tells Dan (and all of us):

"About 5 or 6 years ago I uploaded a text file on hardware mods to the 520 and 1040 ST, all versions. It's still there I think. Use keywords: Hardware Reset."

I'm going to check with Jeff to see if I can use that file here in STReport (perhaps in this column, perhaps as a stand-alone article)... look for it in a few weeks.

Continuing a thread that began last week about what to do with feline-based computer problems (cat hair in the keyboard, cat pawing at mouse, cat pressing keys), Kris Gasteiger tells Lee Seiler of Lexicor Software:

"CAT-A-BOBs? Shish! <GRIN> Excuse me, but these are my friends! Actually, I've considered it, but the reality was a bit beyond me...

I really should just close the door. Hmm, the dream machine needs to be able to know when to close the door! These things ARE supposed to make our lives easier, right?"

Lee tells Kris:

"Cat-Ka-bobs are self sustaining, get a litter, Kabob-the-trouble maker...then watch to see if any of the kits have the same interest...those that do....it's Kitten Fritters and those that don't....are friends for life!"

Kris continues the conversation:

"Hey, mine are spayed! the old one (Butterburr, 17+ years) came to me as a kitten, the other (Waif), was already spayed when she adopted me. Short of cloning, they are biological dead ends...

Kitty fritters, sounds like a madison avenue thing. I'd probably choke on my first byte!

I think I just need to teach my computer to hiss meaner than the cats do."

Lee gives Kris an option:

"I have an 18 or 20 year old black cat sitting here now demanding he be

fed.....How do you know you haven't had Kitty fritters already?

You could try cloning them by placing both cats in a mechanical press and applying lot's of pressure...perhaps their DNA will merge, forming new Kitties?

If not it's instant Kitty burgers!"

Kris tells Lee:

"OOOH! Kitty Burgers! My lady threatens Kitty Pot Pie on occasion, I wonder if there would be trouble at the king's table if such a thing were set next to the four and twenty black bird pie?

I sometimes threaten to use one of those recipies from that new cook book, "101 ways to Woc your Dog". I usually get poked for my efforts. Honest though, we get along just fine!"

Lee takes the scientific/nutritional approach:

"Well Feline fritters and such are for the most part a wonderful way to solve the pet explosion and the world dietary problem all in one. Actually we here in the US eat a very restricted diet of "finished" foods, the lack of genetic diversity may be a more serious health problem than most suspect. That and the fact that our bodies were designed (evolved) to digest "whole" foods, dirt , guts and all, and mostly Bugs, very small animals and vegies with seasonal fruit.

That of course does not include us EggNog drinkers!

Give your Kitty a good Ol'e Holiday whack ! for me :-)"

Now before animal lovers (which includes myself, Kris, and Lee) get up-in-arms about this conversation, let me just point out that the fact that both Lee and Kris own cats, and have had them for many years, proves that this conversation is just for fun with no serious intent whatsoever.

Meanwhile, Milton Horst asks for help in shopping for a computer system:

"I'm thinking of upgrading my system (520ST, Megafile 30, 4MB RAM, TOS1.4) and am interested in a Falcon or a TT. Who has the best deals on these in the U.S.?"

Brian Gockley of ST Informer tells Milton:

"As far as Falcons, the price seems to have stayed pretty solidly at around 1200\$ -1300\$ (US). You will need to go to a local dealer, if you have one, or contact Atari directly to arrange for purchase. Falcon is sold only in protected territories, and they are very strict about this."

Milton gives voice to the question that many are now asking:

"Really? What happened to 'Power without the price'? This may mean that Falcons are cheaper in Europe than in the US. Quite a change from the 'old days'. If I'm looking at a four-figure price tag, maybe I should save up for a NeXT!"

From the Atari ST Arts Forum

=====

Clive Moore sends up an S.O.S.:

"Please can anyone help me. I am using an atari 520 with 1Meg ram. I have downloaded a Gif from the space forum but can not show it. Which program should I use. Picsw1 gives me a Tos error..."

Sysop Bob Retelle tells Clive:

"GEMVIEW which should be in our VIEWERS library here in ATARIARTS should display the GIF file you've got... give it a try..."

What TOS error did PICSW1 give you when you tried to use it..?"

Yat at Lexicor Software tells Clive (and Bob):

"GEM View will display it but will attempt to color dither it, Speed of Light on a 520 is much better as it to my knowledge will use the Spectrum Cap. of your 520 ST, i.e. a Gif would be displayed as a Gif with 256 colors, and you can scroll around your screen."

From the Atari Vendors Forum

=====

Rob Rasmussen asks:

"What is the best Atari system to have to view graphics? I use my ST for a lot of things, but graphics is where it seems to fall short. I like to manipulate images, scale parts of it bigger, add colors and have it look great on the screen. My ST can't handle higher rez GIFs on my 1224 monitor unless I convert them and scrunch them to fit. Then they are tiny, and I want something better. I've heard the Mac is capable of great results with high rez images, but also the TT and Falcon can do a lot. I'm kind of in the fog about it, but I don't want to have to solder a graphics board into my ST. I need a bigger monitor definitely, but am in the market for a new system and was wondering what you would recommend."

Brian Gockley at ST Informer tells Rob:

"The Falcon is a great picture viewer, though the Nova card will give you more colors at a better resolution. Of course, the graphics cards will only fit in a Mega or a TT, but they also have their own RAM. The best powerhouse would be a TT with a graphics card; you get the speed of the TT, plus the high rez of the card. Boris has this combo, and he is quite familiar with the other platforms; maybe he will pipe up."

Boris Molodyi, being the helpful guy that he is, posts:

"OK, I will pipe up..."

For picture viewing, I'd say that Falcon is fine enough. Of course,

24bit true color is nicer than 15/16 bits, but even 15bit is very nice (especially, after ST's 16 colors max. B-)

For actually doing something with pictures, TT with a graphic card would be better since it has more processing power. OTOH, as I recall,

German accelerator for the Falcon allows for VME cards (or was it a separate product). Of course, it's unknown if it will be available here...

Cards themselves... I would say that when compared with Windows accelerated cards, Atari cards seem to be rather pricey. OTOH, if you compare them with Mac cards, they are much more flexible and even cheaper.

Depending on what you need more, higher resolutions or more colors, you have to choose between different cards. For most of work, something like Crazy Dots II (which has 1 meg of RAM) is quite enough, since you can have resolutions up to 1664*1200 in up to 16 colors (that's virtual resolution; physical should be lower, unless you are willing to put up with lower refresh rates). If you want to work with true color pictures in large resolutions, you need a card with more RAM, like Sunrise card (which also supports higher resolutions and refresh rates). It has 2 meg of RAM, so you can have much higher resolution while still in true color mode.

Of course, one should note that true color modes are necessarily slower than modes with lower number of bitplanes, so unless you do color preprocess or something like that and need to see a true color pictures all at once, a lower priced card should be just fine. OTOH, Sunrise would be much more fun..."

Scott Vinnicombe asks:

"Could you recommend, for a friend of mine who wants to join compuserve, a modem and software for his atari 1024."

Master Sysop Ron Luks tells Scott:

"I assume you mean an Atari 1040 ST or STe. If so, I would recommend any IBM compatible external modem (Supra makes a very good, inexpensive one) and the FLASH II software. There's a demo available in Lib 10 if you want to download it for him."

Bill Turczynski asks the CodeHeads:

"How much to update Warp 9 v3.61 to the latest version? My master disk in a large envelope, right? As I remember three \$.29 stamps will get it there, right?"

Charles F. Johnson, CodeHead extraordinaire, tells Bill:

"The price to upgrade to the latest version of Warp 9 is \$25.00. We recently made it easier to upgrade too; if you registered your copy of Warp 9 with us (by mailing back the reg card), or if you originally ordered directly from us, you can simply send us some Email with a credit card #, and we'll update you without the need to send back your disk."

From the Palmtop Forum
=====

Howard Miller asks a very good question:

"What exactly is a palmtop computer? Can such computers have a

standard QWERTY keyboard? The only one I've had any experience with was from "MicroPalm," it's keyboard was not standard at all. The smallest computer I'm aware of that can have a QWERTY keyboard are notebook/sub-notebook computers. May a palmtop have a QWERTY layout keyboard, too? What do palmtops cost if I want an under \$1,000 model, is it possible?"

Head Honcho Ron Luks tells Howard:

"A palmtop is under 2 lbs (some folks say under 1lb). Many have QWERTY layout keyboards including the CASIO SRF10/20, the Sharp Wizard 8xxx and 9xxx series, and the Psion Series 3 and 3a. All the above units are priced under \$1000. Significantly under \$1000."

Sysop Judy Hamner adds:

"Most palmtops have a QWERTY keyboard. Prices can range from under \$100 for simple electronic organizers to about \$1000 or more for a DOS compatible. If you post your needs (intended use, size, weight, screen, keyboard, DOS compatibility or not, PC connections, etc.) you can get some pointers for the best models for you."

Sysop Marty Mankins jumps into the conversation and tells Howard:

"A palmtop is....

A unit under 2 pounds, a QWERTY keyboard, and an LCD screen.

Those are the basics. The specifics that people now expect are...

PCMCIA or other card slot for expansions and s/w, serial port, long battery life (more than 30 hours) and a way to have access with a modem.

Price should be under \$1000. Average price should be \$450."

Howard's reply took me quite by surprise:

"I would be interested, as a deaf-blind man, in using my braille display with a palmtop.

Such a palmtop needs a standard parallel port, and a serial port to connect an external modem would be needed. Compatibility with MS-DOS is REQUIRED, so I can run the TSR driver for my braille display, which is a parallel port device. A Hard disk is needed as well as a 3.5 inch floppy drive to install software. Windows is NOT wanted, neither are pen-based or trackball palmtops: I do all my work from the normal DOS command line.

And yes, a standard QWERTY keyboard is necessary. How do such keyboards on a palmtop operate? Are they calculator-style or normal keyboards?

So, if there's a palmtop to meet my needs, which ones would you suggest and for what cost?"

Sysop Ron Luks tells Howard:

"The only palmtop I know of that comes close to your list of requirements might be the HP100LX, and I'm not 100% sure it has all the

features you need. I'd suggest you visit the HPHANDHELDS Forum (GO HPHAND) and ask Sysop Ted Dickens or his staff if the HP100LX will do the trick."

From the Casio Z-7000/Tandy Z-PDA area (This is a competitor of the Apple Newton which sports Pen-entry/text recognition and many built-in programs such as a dictionary/thesaurus, conversion tables, language translator, and several games) Kerry Podolsky asks:

"Does anybody know what the update/upgrade capability of the Zoomers are. I mean was Casio smart enough to know that there would probably be BUGS in the ROMmed code (there is a memory leak when switching apps) and did they design in Flash Roms instead of OTP Roms?

What happens when the next generation software capabilities come out, can I just upload new code into my Z or do I have to try and find someone to buy it so I can buy the latest and greatest? Anybody do a study on Future Support of the device? I mean it's got a lot of bells and whistles and people (me included) are going to writing apps for it. But beyond being able to add a 20Mb PCMCIA card or EMBARC to the thing, what about being able to upgrade to GEOS 3.0 (or whatever)?"

Nigel Ballard tells Kerry:

"Although it's technically possible for the Zoomer to receive an OS patch that could be held in ROM or in a card in the PCMCIA slot. However, there currently is no patch in existence, and I know of none so far planned.

Also there is no planned ROM upgrade. Who knows what next year will offer.

Sure, the OS has some niggles including a memory leak and a few instances where the processor will lock. But currently these aren't considered enough to warrant either a patch or a Mk2 ROM."

Bill Parker of CASIO Tech Support tells Kerry:

"Here is how we stand: of course CASIO planned for upgrades for the Z-7000. The product is so new that there has of yet been no discussion of the details. I do know that RAM patches are possible and that hardware wise the ROM's are on a small plug in board that is easily changed. Again, the details of what will happen when changes are available have not been addressed but there are many possibilities.

There is no memory leak bug. There are state files created when switching applications for remembering what you were doing and these can easily be deleted when they accumulate just like we do on our hard drive with Word .tmp files and such.

The Z-7000 is being supported by a group of great companies with a lot of talented people. Whatever changes happen with Geos or Palm or Intuit or Casio, I am sure those changes will be easily incorporated into the existing Z's and future PDA's.

As soon as we are aware of any additions, bugs, drivers that are available for the Z-7000 we will declare and reveal and upload all. Stay tuned to this CASIO Tech Support Channel."

Wow, that's kind of cool! A question is asked and a direct answer is given by someone who both knows what they are talking about and is allowed to share the info! Boy, lots of companies could take a lesson from that.

Dave Goodman posts his:

"Ten Reasons Santa Claus Likes the Zoomer

- 1) It's great for making a list and checking it twice.
- 2) The Zoomer's small size makes it easy to bring down the chimney with him.
- 3) The batteries last so long he doesn't have to keep stealing them from the other toys.
- 4) The flip cover keeps the elves from leaving those little footprints all over the screen.
- 5) It really attracts the babes!
- 6) The games are great during those long flights, and he plays Solitaire when Mrs. Claus finds out about #5.
- 7) The Zoomer doesn't start mis-recognizing words after letting the elves write on it.
- 8) The Zoomers fit better in his sack than those big purple dinosaurs!
- 9) The consumer information helps him watch his diet (cookies: 50 calories, milk: 151 calories).
- 10) He really likes the name ZOOMER!"

Well folks, I'm going to end the column here and leave room for someone else. Be sure to tune in again next week and be ready to take another trip with me down that old electronic highway. All you need is a comfy chair, your reading glasses, and this column. You can see the sights, play all kinds of games with "licence plates", or just sit back and listen to what they are saying when...

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